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In studying the plant with the upper side of the frond toward me I noticed that the fertile stem did not seem to occur in the middle of the base of the sterile segment, but was adherent to it on the left for about an inch. Of 700 specimens examined in the field, *six* were found to be in the exact center, *none* adherent on the right.

NOTCH, STONE Co., Mo.

More Pleasures from Old Fields

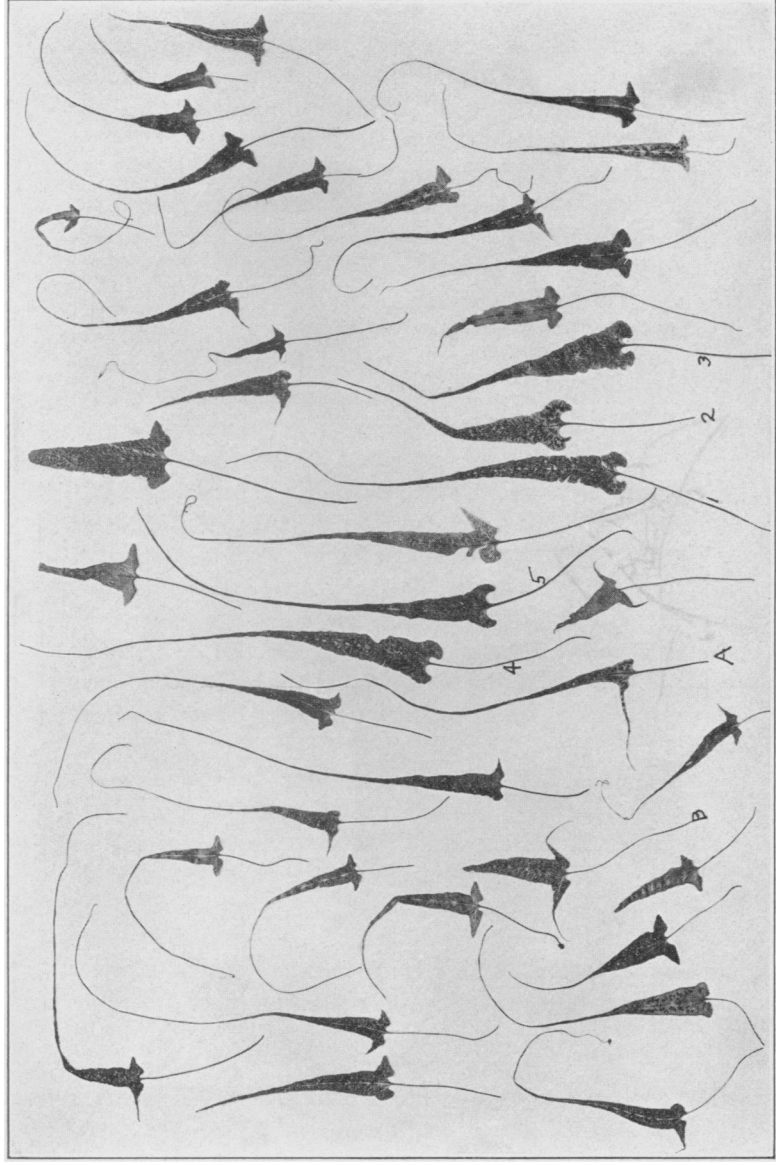
H. E. RANSIER

Much that appeared in the previous article relating to the hart's tongue fern and its variations might apply equally well to the walking fern, but because the latter is so common, nearly every one has had opportunities of becoming familiar with it.

On account of its small fronds and its habit of growing so thickly in beds together, it requires a closer and much sharper inspection to detect variant forms, than does its more favored and thriftier growing relative, the hart's tongue.

I certainly enjoyed *discovering* accidentally my first walking ferns, more than I did my finding the hart's tongue where I knew others had done so before me. And the first ones grew within sight of my place of business and barely outside the corporation limits, in a little glade locally known as "Ewer's Gulf," scarcely an eighth of a mile long, yet a rarely failing source of pleasure for a ramble any day.

Walking ferns are so widely distributed and common that nearly every one has an opportunity to observe the variant forms, and as the fronds are not affected by much of anything except a severe drought, they may be found at all seasons of the year.



FORMS OF BASAL LOBES IN THE WALKING FERN

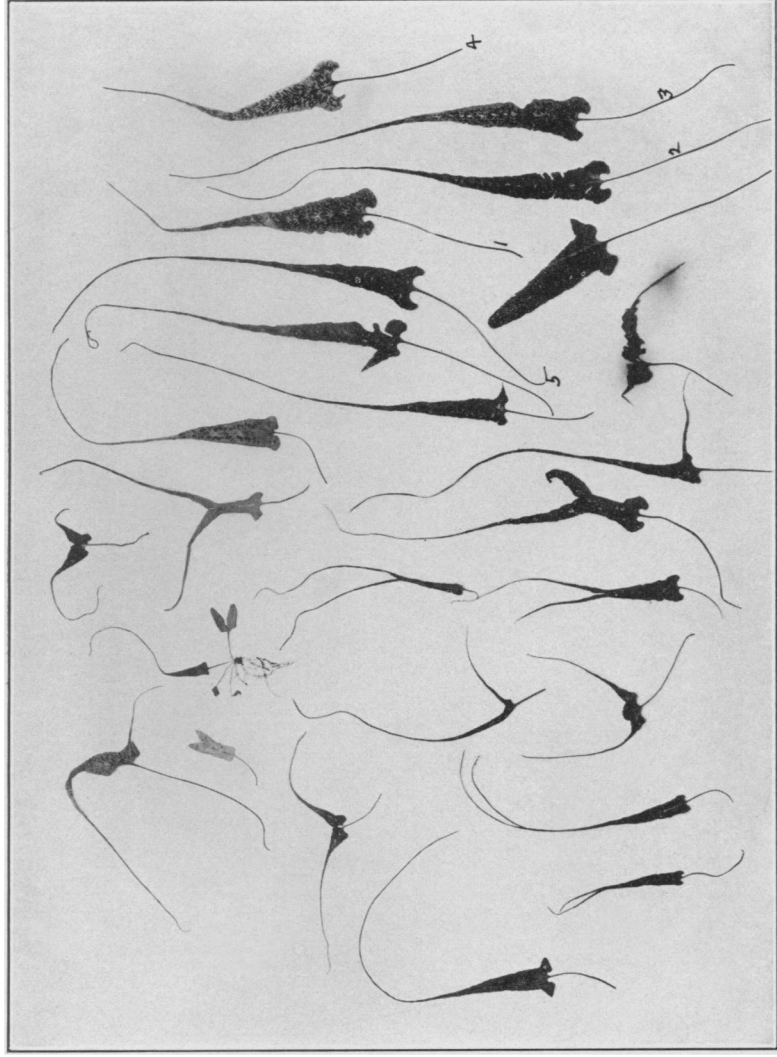
(From a photograph by H. E. Ransier)

Specimens growing in exposed places are apt to have spatulate, short fronds and often grow in dense mats, nearly prostrate and covering the ground almost as closely as grass upon a well kept lawn.

The place to look for the more interesting ones may be quite close by, in the wide seams between rocks, if it is a level section that is shaded, else along the edge of ledges, or perhaps down the bank, either on outcropping rocks or loose ones of the talus.

It loves to grow on the large rocks that occur in tumbled confusion in ravines, moss covered, and protected from direct sunlight by the banks above, trees or shrubbery. Once in a while a large flat detached rock will be found while roaming through the woods, where the finest kind of a colony of walking ferns may be found, completely covering its top, and those along the edges drooping down the sides, a joy to look at and easy to search for unusual forms. It is true that some stations yield only normal forms, but quite close by another may be rich in variant forms. Some parent fern of long ago, having a marked tendency to produce abnormal fronds and possessing proper vitality, left its impress upon the neighborhood as shown by the present day finds. For instance, when one locates fronds normal on one side at the base and with a distinct branch or auricle on the other side, this peculiarity may confidently be looked for anywhere within a range of 50 to 100 feet. The bulk of the fronds on some ferns will show this peculiarity, as will also some show lobes on both sides in the particular area where they occur. Forking fronds are much more apt to occur singly, or at most but two or three together.

This is all dry reading. Just go out and find one good sport frond and you will be thrilled a hundred times more than by ever receiving a pressed one from some one else. The beauty, charm and pleasure come from first hand experiences in nature's own realm.



VARIANT TIPS AND BASAL LOBES IN THE WALKING FERN
(From a photograph by H. E. Ransier)

The cuts illustrating this article show fronds about $\frac{1}{2}$ th their normal size. The figures indicate normal forms. Letters indicate marked variations.

MANLIUS, N. Y.

Experiences with a Fern Garden--III

C. L. GRUBER

The boulder fern has not yet entered upon an era of prosperity in my fern garden. Although the rootstock rambles away a short distance each summer and each spring, about April 30, sends up a few fronds, these fronds do not reach the height which is attained in their native habitats and seem to grow more as a special favor to me than from an inclination to establish themselves permanently. Probably the character of the soil is not adapted to more thrifty growth, but I have not yet taken sufficient time to experiment in this respect.

In August, 1912, I planted one maidenhair fern on the fern bed and a row of five along the wall on the northeast side of the cellar containing the heating-furnace. The plant on the fern bed grew poorly and died in 1914; but the row along the warm cellar wall grew luxuriantly and developed into the finest bank of maidenhairs I have ever seen. For a foot or more from the wall the ground does not freeze up as it does further away; and as a result the ferns begin to grow somewhat earlier in spring than they do in a wild state. Most of the first fronds, and a large percentage of all the fronds are fertile. The plant on the fern bed began growing on April 16, but those along the house appeared from April 5 to April 10; and the dark brown sporangia ripened during the first week in July, later fronds maturing their fruit till the close of August or the beginning of September. In 1915 most of the fronds were over a foot in height by April 25.